

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Catholic Church the Promoter
and Defender of Rights of
Conscience.

Opposed Coercion and Persecution—Taught Respect For
Free Will of Men.

Magna Charta and American
Liberty Fruits of Catholic
Influence.

HISTORY VERSUS FANATICAL FALLACY

Editor Kentucky Irish American:

I desire to publish in the Kentucky Irish American (that paper bearing from its masthead three of the brightest names ever catalogued) a series of articles upon the great subject of religious toleration, to show that the Catholic church has always been the firm, consistent and bold advocate of this great doctrine of our constitution—the magna charta of human liberty.

A man enjoys religious liberty when he possesses the free right of worshiping God according to the dictates of a right conscience and of practicing a form of religion most in accordance with his duties to God. Every act infringing on his freedom of conscience is justly styled religious intolerance. This religious liberty is the true right of every man, because it corresponds with a most certain duty which God has put upon him. A man enjoys civil liberty when he is exempt from the arbitrary will of others and when he is governed by equitable laws established for the general welfare of society. So long as, in common with his fellow-citizens, he observes the laws of the State, any exceptional restraint imposed upon him in the exercise of his rights as a citizen is so far an infringement on his civil liberty. I here assert the proposition, which I hope to confirm by historical evidence, that the Catholic church has always been the zealous advocate and promoter of civil and religious liberty; and that whenever any encroachments on these sacred rights of man were perpetrated by professing members of the Catholic faith these wrongs, far from being sanctioned by the church, were committed in palpable violation of her authority. Her doctrine is that as man by his own free will fell from grace, so of his own free will must he return to grace. Conversion and coercion are two terms that can never be reconciled. They are utterly incompatible with each other. It has ever been a cardinal maxim, inculcated by sovereign Pontiffs and other prelates, that no violence or undue influence should be exercised by Christian princes or missionaries in their efforts to convert souls to the faith of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine and his companions, who were sent by Pope Gregory I. to England for the conversion of that nation, had the happiness of baptizing in the true faith King Ethelbert and many of his subjects. That monarch, in the fervor of zeal, was most anxious that all his subjects should immediately follow his example; but the missionaries admonished him that he should scrupulously abstain from all violence in the conversion of his people, for the Christian religion should be voluntarily embraced. Pope Nicholas I. also warned Michael, King of the Bulgarians, against employing any force or constraint in the conversion of idolaters. The fourth Council of Toledo, a synod of great authority in the church, ordained that no one should be compelled against his will to make a profession of the Christian faith. And be it remembered that this council was composed of all the Bishops of Spain, and was assembled in a country and at a time in which the church held almost unlimited sway and among a people who have been represented as the most fanatical and intolerant of all Europe. Perhaps no man can be considered a fairer representative of the age in which he lived than St. Bernard, the illustrious Abbot of Clairvaux. He was the embodiment of the spirit of the middle ages. His life is the key that discloses what degree of toleration prevailed in those days. Having heard that a fanatical preacher was stimulating the people to deeds of violence against the Jews as the enemies of Christianity, St. Bernard raised his eloquent voice against him and rescued those persecuted people from the dangers to which they were exposed.

Not to cite too many examples, let me only quote for you the beautiful letter of Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, addressed to the son of King James II. of England. This letter not only reflects the sentiment of his own heart, but formulates in this particular the decrees of the church of which he was a distinguished ornament. "Above all," he writes, "never force your subjects to change their religion. No human power can reach the impenetrable recesses of the free will of the heart. Violence can never persuade men; it serves only to make hypocrites. Grant civil rights to all, not in approving everything as indifferent, but in tolerating with patience whatever Almighty God tolerates and in endeavoring to convert men by mild persuasion."

It is true, indeed, that the Catholic church spares no pains and stops at no sacrifice in order to induce mankind to embrace her faith. Otherwise she would be recreant to her sacred mission. But she scorns to exercise any undue influence in her efforts to convert souls. It is well known that the superior advantages of our female academies throughout the country lead many of our dissenting brethren to send their daughters to these institutions. It is also well known that so warm is the affection which these young ladies entertain for

the atmosphere they breathe in the seats their religious teachers, so hallowed is of learning, that they beg to embrace a religion that fosters so much piety and produces such pure and fragrant lilies. Do the Sisters take advantage of this influence in the cause of proselytism? By no means. So delicate is their regard for the religious conscience of their pupils that they rarely consent to have these young ladies baptised till they have obtained the free permission of their parents or guardians, after being thoroughly instructed in all the doctrines of the church.

The church is, indeed, so intolerant in this sense that she can never confound truth with error, nor can she admit that any man is conscientiously free to reject the truth when its claims are convincingly brought home to the mind. Many Protestants seem to be very much disturbed by some such argument as this: Catholics are very ready now to proclaim freedom of conscience because they are in the minority. When they once succeed in getting the upper hand in numbers and power they will destroy this freedom, because their faith teaches them to tolerate no doctrine other than the Catholic. It is, then, a matter of absolute necessity for us that they should never be allowed to get this advantage.

Now, in all this there is a great mistake, which comes from not knowing in its fullness the Catholic doctrine. I shall not lay it down myself lest it seem to have been gotten of for the occasion. I quote the great Becanus, who is admitted to have been the greatest theologian of his time, who taught the doctrine of the schools of Catholic theology at the time when the struggle was hottest between Catholicity and Protestantism. He says that religious liberty may be tolerated by a ruler when it would do more harm to the State or to the community to repress it. The ruler may even enter into a compact in order to secure to his subjects this freedom in religious matters, and when once a compact is made it must justly be observed in every point, just as every other lawful and honest contract. This is the true Catholic teaching on this point, according to Becanus and all Catholic theologians and Ecumenical Councils. So that if Catholics should gain the majority in a community where freedom of conscience is already secured to all by law their very religion obliges them to respect the rights thus acquired by their fellow-citizens. What danger can there be then for Protestants if Catholics should be in the majority here? Their apprehensions are the result of vain fears, which no honest mind ought any longer to harbor. The church has not only respected the conscience of the people in embracing the religion of their choice, but she has also defended their civil rights and liberties against the encroachments of temporal sovereigns. One of the popular errors that have taken possession of the minds of some persons in our times is that in former days the church was leagued with princes for the oppression of the people. This is a base calumny, which a slight acquaintance with ecclesiastical history would soon dispel. The truth is, the most unrelenting enemies of the church have been the princes of this world, and so-called Christian princes, too. The conflict between church and State has never died out, because the church has felt it to be her bounden and imperative duty in every age to raise her voice against the despotic and arbitrary measures of princes. And an eminent Protestant reviewer well said, some years ago, it was a blessing of Providence that there was a spiritual power on earth that could stand like a wall against the tyranny of sovereigns and say to them: Thus far you shall go and no farther, and here you shall break your swelling waves of passion; a power that would say to them what John said to Herod: This thing is not lawful for thee; a power that pointed the finger of reproof to them even when the sword was pointed to her own fair neck and said to them what Nathan said to David: "Thou art the man." She told princes that if the people have their obligations they have their rights, too; that if the subject must render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, Caesar must render to God the things that are God's.

Yes, the church while pursuing her divine mission of leading souls to God has ever been the defender of the people's rights. St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, affords us a striking instance of the strenuous efforts made by the Catholic church in vindicating the interests of the citizen against the oppression of rulers. A portion of the people of Thessalonica had committed an outrage against the just authority of the Emperor Theodosius. The offense of those citizens was indeed most reprehensible, but the Emperor requited the insult offered to him by a shocking and disproportionate act of retribution, which has left an indelible stain upon his otherwise excellent character. The inhabitants were assembled together for the ostensible purpose of witnessing a chariot race, and at a given signal the soldiery fell upon the people and involved men, women and children in an indiscriminate massacre to the number of about seven thousand. Some time after the Emperor presented himself at the Cathedral of Milan, but the intrepid prelate told him that his hands were dripping with the blood of his subjects, and forbade him entrance to the church till he had made all the reparation in his power to the afflicted people of Thessalonica. People affect to be shocked at the sentence of excommunication occasionally inflicted by the church on evil-doers. Here is an instance of this penalty. Who can complain of it as being too severe? It was a salutary punishment and the only one that could bring rulers to a sense of duty. The greatest bulwark of civil liberty is the famous Magna Charta. It is the foundation not only of British, but also of American constitutional freedom. Among other blessings contained in this instrument, it establishes trial by jury and the right of habeas corpus, and provides that there shall be no taxation without representation. Who were the framers of this memorable charter? Archbishop Langston of Canterbury and the

Rocker Special...



HANDSOME LINE OF ROCKERS,

Of which the above is one.

Our Special \$2.50 Rocker

Is a beauty and the bargain of the Holiday season. It speaks for itself. Music Cabinets and Ladies' Desks at like low prices. Nothing sold but guaranteed goods.

We Give Trading Checks. Ask for Them

LEADERS OF LOW PRICES.

S. M. RAFFO & CO.

321 West Market Street.

EVERYTHING PERTAINING TO CHRISTMAS!

In great quantities and of unquestionable quality, and the price is lower than the rest. TRY US.

Mammoth Grocery Company

Wholesale and Retail. Second and Jefferson.

Catholic barons of England. On the plains of Runnymede, in 1215, they compelled King John to sign that paper, which was the death blow to his arbitrary power and the corner-stone of constitutional liberty.

Turning to our own country, it is with no small degree of satisfaction that we point to the State of Maryland as the cradle of civil and religious liberty and the "land of the sanctuary." Of the thirteen original American colonies Maryland was the only one that was settled by Catholics. She was also the only one that spread aloft over her fair lands the glorious banner of liberty of conscience and that invited the oppressed of other colonies to seek an asylum beneath its shadow. Lest I should be suspected of being too partial in my praise of Maryland toleration, I shall take all my historical facts from Bancroft, a New England Protestant clergyman, but a veracious and an impartial historian: "Leonard Calvert, the brother of Lord Baltimore and the leader of the Catholic colony, having sailed from England in the Ark and Dove, reached his destination on the Potomac in March, 1634. The Catholics took quiet possession of the little place and religion obtained a home, its only home in the wide world, at the humble village which bore the name of St. Mary's. The foundation of the colony of Maryland was peacefully and happily laid. Within six months it had advanced more than Virginia had done in as many years. But far more memorable was the character of the Maryland institutions. Every other in the world had persecuting laws, but through the benign administration of the government of that province no person professing to believe in Jesus Christ was permitted to be molested on account of religion. Under the munificence and superintending mildness of Lord Baltimore a dreary wilderness was soon quickened with the swarming life and activity of prosperous settlements. The Roman Catholics who were oppressed by the laws of England were sure to find a peaceful asylum in quiet harbors of the Chesapeake, and there, too, Protestants were sheltered against Protestant intolerance. Such were the beautiful auspices under which Maryland started into being. Its history is the history of benevolence, gratitude and toleration. Maryland was the abode of happiness and liberty. Conscience was without restraint. A mild and liberal proprietary ruled every measure which the welfare

of the colony required, domestic union, a happy concert between all the branches of government, an increasing emigration, a productive commerce, a fertile soil, which heaven had richly favored with rivers and deep bays, united to perfect the scene of colonial felicity. Ever intent on advancing the interests of his colony, Lord Baltimore invited the Puritans of Massachusetts to emigrate to Maryland, offering lands and privileges and free liberty of religion. But Gibbons, to whom he had forwarded the commission, was so wholly tutored in the New England discipline that he would not advance the wishes of the Irish peer, and so the invitation was declined."

Now, my fellow-countrymen, this is the testimony of Bancroft, a Protestant historian of undoubted veracity, which stands unimpeached and is unimpeachable. What shall I say of the prominent part that was taken by distinguished representatives of the Catholic church in the cause of our American independence? What shall I say of Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, who at the risk of sacrificing his rich estates signed the Declaration of Independence; of the Rev. John Carroll, afterward the first Archbishop of Baltimore, the bosom friend of Washington, who, with his cousin Charles Carroll and Benjamin Franklin, was sent by Congress to Canada to secure the co-operation of the people of that province in the struggle for liberty; of Kosciuszko, Lafayette, Pulaski, Barry, Montgomery, De Steuben and De Kalb and a host of other Catholic heroes who labored so effectively and fought so gallantly in the same glorious cause? American patriots without number the church has nursed in her bosom; a traitor, never!

Now, you see, the Catholic church is thoroughly democratic, and democratic is Catholic.

IRISH BRIGADE.

CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.

of the Confederate guns are the best evidence what manner of men they were who pressed on to death with the dauntlessness of a race which has gained glory on a thousand battlefields, and never more richly deserved it than at the foot of Marye's Heights on December 12, 1862.

The brave man dies, but gallant deeds immortal will be found. And travelers tell that, to this day, The children playing round

Louisville's Greatest Store.

Ladies' Stylish Jackets.

\$2.98

For Ladies' black Beaver Cloth Jackets, double-breasted front, with large rolling collar.

\$4.98

For Ladies' black, double-breasted, extra quality, Beaver Cloth Jackets, made very stylish.

\$5.98

For Ladies' extra quality, black cutaway Beaver Cloth Jackets, made very stylish and very becoming.

\$1.65

For Childrens' Novelty Cloth Box Coats, trimmed with braid; worth \$2.75.

Colored

Dress Goods.

25c

For all-wool Cloth Suitings, 35 inches wide, in Scotch Mixed effects.

35c

For all-wool, two-toned Suiting, 38 inches wide, in a number of choice patterns.

40c

For beautiful Plaid Dress Goods, 36 inches wide, for ladies' waists and children's dresses.

25c

For all-wool Check Suitings, 34 inches wide, all the new combinations.

Ladies'

Silk Waists.

\$3.98

For Ladies' elegant quality Black Taffeta Silk Waists, made in the latest style.

\$4.98

For Ladies' lovely Satin Waists, made full front, yoke back, in red, heliotrope or Royal blue.

Art Needlework.

Filo-Twist, Roman, Dresden-shaded Silk Flosses, all shades, 30c per dozen skeins.

Stamped Doylies, 7-inch, in roses, violets, lilies of the valley, strawberries, etc., with scalloped edges, each

2c

Stamped Center Pieces, 18 inches, with scalloped edge, in holly, violets, roses, forget-me-nots, etc.,

9c

CARPETS,
Oil Cloths, Linoleums, Lace Curtains, Window Shades.

J. Bacon & Sons,

425 to 429 East Market Street,

LOUISVILLE, KY.

LAWLER'S
MONARCH

A. O. H. SUPERIOR
5 CENT CIGARS.

Manufactured at
Eighteenth and Duncan Streets.

BUCKINGHAM

Week Com. Sunday Matinee, December 18

MAT FLYNN'S
BIG SENSATION

Double Vaudeville and Burlesque
Organization, Presenting

A JOKE IN HIGH LIFE

And the Spectacular Farce,
WHO OWNS THE PHILIPPINES

TEMPLE THEATER

W. H. MEFFERT, MANAGER.

MEFFERT STOCK COMPANY

—IN—
THREE HATS!

Matinee Daily at 2:15. Night Performances
at 8:15. Popular Prices—10, 15, 25, 35c. No higher.

Can point the stranger to the spot.
The fairest in the scene.
The grave where sleep those Irish boys
Who wore the sprigs of green.

Patrick Madigan, a bailiff, Limerick,
has been returned for trial charged with
the murder of Patrick Tobin, who was
shot in the recent affray on the Mayno

FURNITURE.

If You Want Fair Treatment Call On
THE...

Etheridge
Furniture
Company.

(INCORPORATED.)

WHOLESALE AND RETAILERS.

Furniture

OF ALL KINDS.

PARLOR,
BED-ROOM,
DINING-ROOM,
and KITCHEN.

324 West Market St.,
LOUISVILLE, KY.

TELEPHONE 527.